



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



R.E.D. SHIRT FRIDAY EVENT TO RECOGNIZE THOSE DEPLOYED

South Dakota employers, schools, and residents are encouraged to show their support for all service members deployed overseas by participating in a R.E.D. (Remember Everyone Deployed) Shirt Friday event on Feb. 26.

The South Dakota National Guard and the S.D. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve invite the public to participate by wearing a red shirt on all Fridays while South Dakota citizens are deployed, and remember and honor all members of the military for their service to the state and nation. The R.E.D. event will highlight soldiers and airmen with the SDNG's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and the 114th Fighter Wing currently deployed overseas.

"Wearing red shirts on Fridays sends a strong and unified message to our service members and families that they are not forgotten and we appreciate their sacrifice to our country," said Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, adjutant general of the SDNG. "Wearing a red shirt is a simple gesture, but the meaning behind it is significant."

South Dakota employers, schools, and citizens are encouraged to provide additional support by:

- Sign a Statement of Support through the ESGR to show your support (for more information about this please contact the SD ESGR Program Office at 605-737-6540)
- Send cards/letters to the unit or someone in the unit
- Create a banner or video from your organization to send to the unit
- Check in with the family of a deployed service member
- Provide a meal for a family of a deployed service member
- Use the hashtag #RememberEveryoneDeployed when posting your pictures to social media sites
- Send a picture of your company/school to: redshirtfriday.southdakota@gmail.com and we will share your picture through our social media sites
- Support the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs or a veteran service organization in your community.

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MESSAGE FROM SDDVA SECRETARY WHITLOCK— CONNECTING WITH OUR VETERANS

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs mission is to “provide comprehensive care and quality service to veterans and their families, regarding health care, education, disability benefits, long-term care, and burial honors by providing professional customer service and care.” We carry out our mission not just as an expression of gratitude to those who have served, but also for the sake of our South Dakota communities and businesses. After all, our veterans are proven, hardworking, and dedicated people – assets to their communities, the workforce, and countless organizations. The contributions of our South Dakota heroes allow our South Dakota communities to thrive.



It is important that we help our veterans move ahead, live life to the fullest, reintegrate into their communities and have access to high quality benefits and services in a timely, consistent, and equitable manner. It is important that we help them establish a “new normal” in family relationships, wellness, and financial stability.

As policies, procedures, and laws change, so do the veterans we serve. The World War II, Korean, and Vietnam Veterans are of retirement age and need assistance applying for pension and medical benefits. At the other end of the spectrum, we have the Post-and-Pre-9-11 Veterans who have different issues ranging from educational benefits, OJT programs and home loans.

Our state veterans service officers and our county and tribal veterans service officers are experts in helping veterans navigate the complex system of federal, state, and local benefits and resources available to veterans and their families. Encourage your veteran to contact the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (605.333.6869) or their local county or tribal veterans service officer.

Help us be as responsive to our youngest veterans as we are to our oldest veterans. Help us to return functionality to the men and women wounded in service. Help us guide our veterans to the resources that can help them and their families. As our state’s veteran population and their needs continue to change and evolve, so will our team of advocates and our delivery of service.

FALLEN HERO BRIDGE DEDICATION NOMINATIONS BEING ACCEPTED

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is now accepting nominations for South Dakota's "Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication" program. South Dakota has dedicated seven bridges honoring nine heroes since dedications started in 2019.

In 2021, South Dakota will dedicate six more state bridges in honor of fallen heroes that died while serving in combat or classified as missing in action. More than 3,000 South Dakotans have made the ultimate sacrifice.

"Our fallen heroes are no longer with us, but their memories live on in the hearts of their loved ones and our state," said Greg Whitlock, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "Naming our South Dakota bridges in honor of our fallen gives us an opportunity for remembrance, reflection, and respect – honoring the men and women who gave their lives in service to this nation. They cherished liberty and loved freedom enough to lay down their lives to preserve our way of life."

Nominations are due by April 1 to the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs with all supporting documentation attached. The simple, online form is available at:

<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/Fallen%20Hero%20Bridge%20Dedications/SDDOM%20SDDVA%20Bridge%20Naming%20Application.pdf>.

Nominators are encouraged to indicate their preferred state bridge site for their respective hero.

To view the list of South Dakota casualties by county, visit:

<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/War%20Casualties%20by%20County.aspx>



VIETNAM VETERANS CHAPTER 1054 RECOGNIZED BY THE SD HALL OF FAME

Congratulations to the Vietnam Veterans Chapter of America #1054 of Watertown for being awarded the South Dakota Hall of Fame Acts of Excellence award.

The mission of the South Dakota Hall of Fame is Championing a Culture of Excellence in South Dakota. Every day, South Dakotans do extraordinary things. The Acts of Excellence (AOE) program recognizes the individuals and organizations who are building a culture of excellence in South Dakota, one act at a time

VVA 1054 is being championed "The Culture of Excellence" for their selfless work in helping veterans in need and for saluting hospital personnel and first responders.

Congrats VVA 1054 and thanks for all you do for our heroes!



Vietnam Veterans Chapter 1054 Continues Helping Others

Vietnam Veterans Chapter 1054 continues to help Vets in need and salutes Hospital Personnel and First Responders. In 2020 this chapter has given \$26,000 to Vets in Need and organizations that support Vets in addition to money for ROTC scholarships, the State Veteran Cemetery in Sioux Falls, and the Salvation Army. In addition to serving veterans of NE SD and their families, the chapter recognizes the "unsung" heroes of today-Healthcare

workers and First Responders. Taking every effort to be responsible and generous, this group not only donates their time and support beyond the Color Guards and Honor Guards to outreach in 9 counties of NE SD.

Visit the Chapters website at:
vva.org/chapter/vva-chapter-1054

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

The Social Security Administration has created a new website, [Information for People Helping Others](#), which provides helpful resources in one place for anyone in a position to help another person access their programs and services.

They are encouraging you to use the new website as a resource.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause hardships, especially for those who have historically relied on face-to-face meetings to get the help they need. Over the past year, the SSA have worked closely with advocates to improve service to vulnerable populations.



Social Security

Information for People Helping Others

VA UPDATES DISABILITY RATING

The musculoskeletal and muscle injuries portion of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities \(VASRD\)](#) has been revised to reflect updated medical information used to assess veterans' medical records and determine their VA disability rating.

The revision, effective Feb. 7, ensures that this portion of the VASRD uses current medical terminology by removing obsolete conditions, clarifying ambiguities, and providing detailed and updated criteria for the evaluation of musculoskeletal and muscle injury disabilities, including adding conditions that previously did not have diagnostic codes.

Claims for musculoskeletal and/or muscle injury conditions adjudicated after Feb. 7, but were pending on the effective date, will be considered under both the old and new rating criteria, and whichever criteria is more favorable to the veteran will be applied. Claims filed on or after the effective date will be rated under the new criteria.

Click here to learn more about [the complete list of updates](#) to the rating schedule. Veterans with questions regarding this VASRD update may contact VA at 800-827-1000.

VA LAUNCHES PUBLIC GUIDANCE TO FURTHER PROTECT VETERANS' PERSONAL INFORMATION

This February the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched [Ethics Principles for Access to and Use of Veteran Data](#) as part of ongoing efforts to protect veteran data.

The new online resource outlines [nine principles](#) for communicating clear expectations on how veteran data is to be managed and viewed by veterans, staff, VA partners, and other stakeholders.

These principles reinforce the VA's standards of data privacy and protection maintained during VA's distribution of nearly two million COVID-19 vaccinations to date, and other critical health care services during the coronavirus pandemic.

"The VA's principle-based ethics framework takes a proactive approach to data management and privacy by setting standards for our partners to follow," says Acting VA Under Secretary for Health Richard Stone, M.D. "The VA is applying this framework to all data interoperability initiatives, including those tied to our COVID-19 response and modernization efforts."

Having clearly defined integrities for everyone who accesses or uses veteran data puts the VA at the forefront of organizational responsibility for ethical data practices. Veterans trust the VA to promote and respect their privacy, confidentiality, and autonomy within the services the Department provides and supports. The Department will continue to uphold that trust by remaining consistent with the VA's [I-CARE](#) values of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence to promote and ensure responsible practices whenever veteran data is accessed or used.

The ethics framework was developed by the Data Ethics Work Group established by the VA Interoperability Leadership team and the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) National Center for Ethics in Health Care, along with input from veterans. The Department is actively working to ensure all VA directives, policies, and standards reflect these principles which the agency anticipates completing by the end of 2022.

Click here to learn more about VA's COVID-19 vaccination response and how [VHA's National Center for Ethics in Health Care](#) continues to work proactively to build trust in managing access and use of veteran data.



WISH LIST ITEMS FOR RESIDENTS AT STATE VETERANS HOME



It's been brought to our attention that there are a few items on the wish list for the veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.

One of those wish list items is greeting cards. The residents like to send thinking of you, happy birthday, happy anniversary, and sympathy cards to friends and family members. Please help us supply these heroes with cards they can use to communicate with their loved ones. Blank cards can be sent to: Lanae Romey, Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, 2500 Minnekahta Avenue, Hot Springs, SD 57747.

We all love that wonderful aroma that permeates a room when homemade bread is baking!

Can't you just imagine the smile on our heroes faces when they can smell that homemade bread, or when they have the opportunity to bake a loaf of bread using their mom's recipe!

The State Veterans Home would welcome any donations of breadmakers for the eight neighborhoods at the Home. If you are interested in donating a breadmaker for the heroes, please reach out to Lanae Romey at 605-745-5127.



KUDOS TO BHSU

A special "shout out" to Black Hills State University for being placed on the Military Friendly gold list which is the highest level of service a college or university can provide for veterans and military personnel.

Learn more about Military Friendly at: <https://www.militaryfriendly.com/>.



DSS SECURES PLANNING GRANT FOR 988 SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

Planning for the launch of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's 988 dialing code will get a boost from a grant awarded to the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

The grant, awarded through Vibrant Emotional Health, will be used to develop strategic plans in preparation for the projected infrastructure needs, volume growth, and access to the Lifeline's new 988 number. In July 2022, 988 will become the national three-digit dialing code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline replacing the current 1.800.273.TALK (8255) phone number. South Dakotans needing support should continue to use that number until then.

DSS, together with the Helpline Center and other stakeholders, will develop clear roadmaps to address coordination, capacity, funding, and communications surrounding the launch of 988. DSS will collaborate with state leadership, suicide prevention experts, people with lived experience, and others to create a 988 implementation plan and support the Lifeline's operational, clinical, and performance standards that allow access to care.

Vibrant Emotional Health believes the new 988 number, once implemented, will ensure the Lifeline will continue to be America's mental health safety net by providing emotional support for people in distress, reducing suicides and mental health crises, and providing a pathway to well-being for all.

"Access to mental health and crisis support has never been more critical for Americans," said Kimberly Williams, president and CEO of Vibrant Emotional Health. "Vibrant is committed to providing the states and territories with some of the resources they'll need to plan for the implementation of 988 and to support their local crisis centers. By working together, we will increase access to care, reduce the stigma around mental health, and, ultimately, save lives."

For more information, click on the Behavioral Health tab at dss.sd.gov or visit suicidepreventionlifeline.org.



[GET HELP](#) [LEARN](#) [GET INVOLVED](#) [PROVIDERS & PROFESSIONALS](#)

1-800-273-8255 [CHAT](#)
[En Español](#) | [For Deaf & Hard of Hearing](#)



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.



Free Drop-In Legal Clinic

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTAState Bar of *South Dakota*

JOIN US ON:

- **March 19, 2021 from 9am-3pm at the DAV- Sioux Falls Chapter.**
In-Person and Zoom options available. 1519 W 51st Street, Sioux Falls, SD
 - **March 20, 2021 from 9am-3pm at the VFW-Brookings.**
520 Main Avenue, Brookings, SD
- To reserve an hour time slot, please contact the University of South Dakota Knudson School of Law Veterans Legal Education Group via phone or email.
Phone: 605-658-3530 Email: vleg@usd.edu

Join the Veterans Legal Education Group and the South Dakota Low Income Taxpayer Clinic for a FREE LEGAL CLINIC. Legal professionals, along with student attorneys, will be on site to address and support the Military community and their families with any legal questions and needs.

Assistance will be provided for military issues, tax issues, family law, criminal law, civil matters, etc. Wills and trusts can be created and executed on site.

FREE FOR ALL SERVICE MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND VETERANS!

EVENT CONTACT:

USD Law Veterans Legal Education Group
Phone: 605-658-3530
Email: VLEG@usd.edu

SUPPORTED BY:

State Bar of South Dakota Veterans
Committee and Young Lawyers Section

Social Distancing guidelines will be followed and masks are required at all clinics. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available upon request.

DO GOOD WITH BURRITOS



Join us at our restaurant for a fundraiser to support Warriors Never Give Up. Just come in to the Chipotle at **4035 West 41st St** in Sioux Falls on **Monday, March 1st** from **4:00pm to 8:00pm**. Bring in this flyer, show it on your smartphone or tell the cashier you're supporting the cause to make sure that 33% of the proceeds will be donated to Warriors Never Give Up.

NEW! ORDER ONLINE FOR PICKUP

Use code C8L4M6P before checkout in 'promo' field. Orders placed on Chipotle.com or through the Chipotle app for pickup using this unique code will be counted towards the fundraiser.



All online orders must be placed for pickup at the same time/location of the fundraiser. Delivery cannot be counted at this time. Gift card purchases during fundraisers do not count towards total donated sales, but purchases made with an existing gift card will count. \$150 minimum event sales required to receive any donation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 19—Free Drop-In Legal Clinic—DAV—1519 W. 51st Street—Sioux Falls—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)

Mar 20—Free Drop-In Legal Clinic—VFW—520 Main Avenue—Brookings—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)

June 24-27—American Legion State Convention—Huron

Aug 16-19—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre

A BIG “shout out” and “kudos” to our partners at the River Cities Public Transit! RCPT has added promotional messages on their busses in the Sioux Falls area to increase awareness to the foundation fund for the State Veterans Cemetery.



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